



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

### Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

### About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>

NYPL RESEARCH LIBRARIES



3 3433 07574149 0

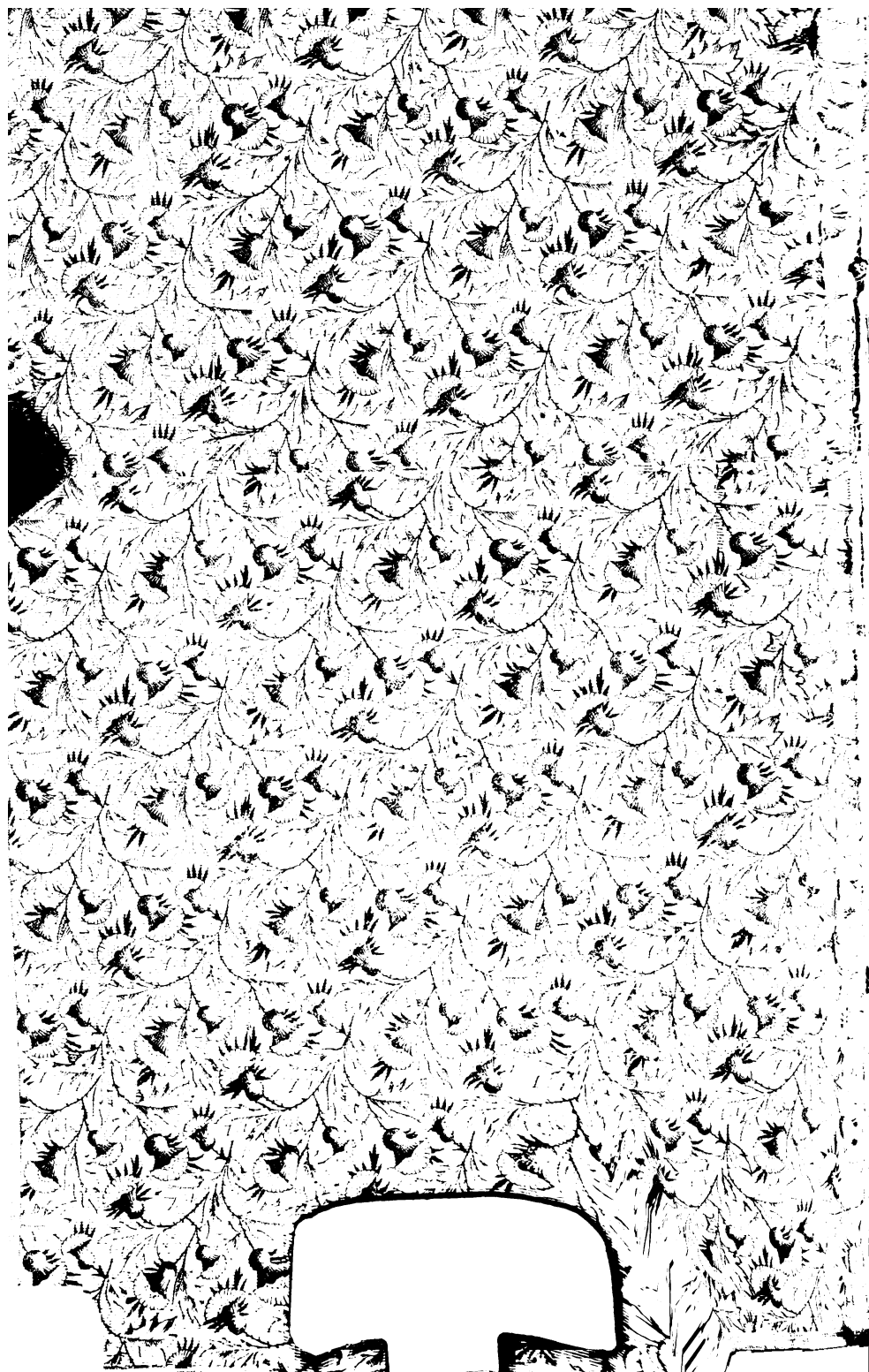
CONFESSIONS OF

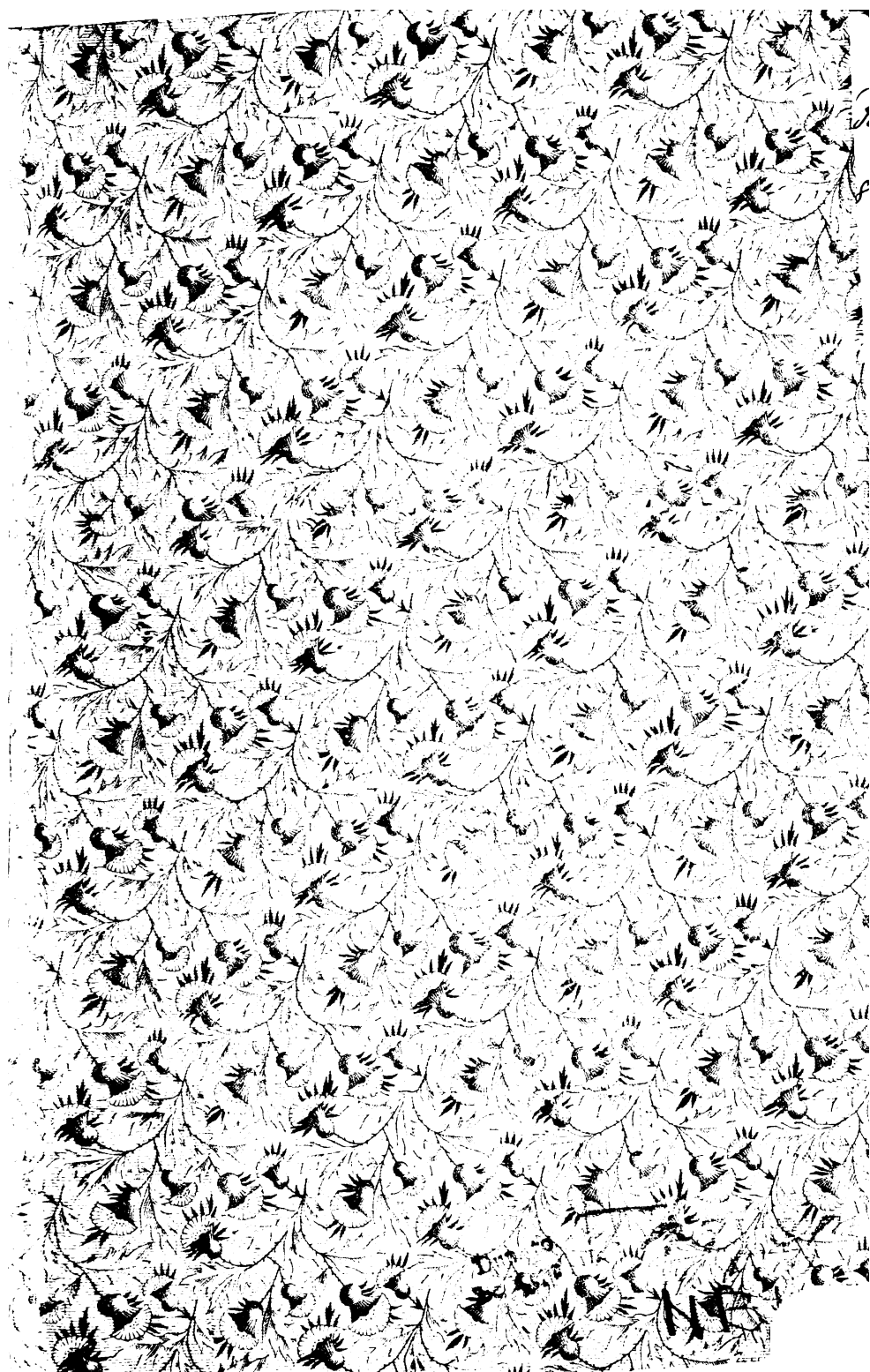
❖ HERMES ❖

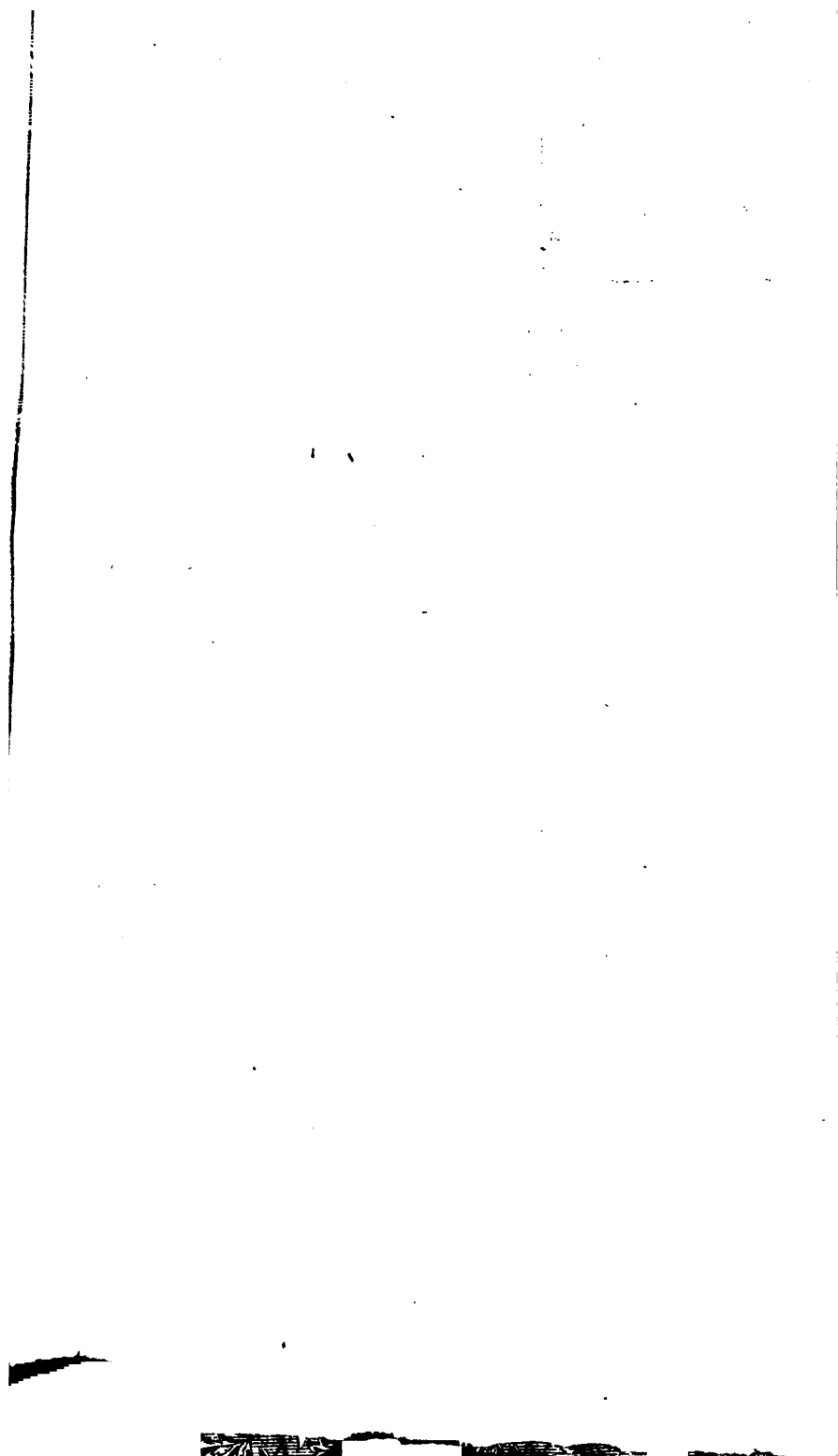
PAUL HERMES

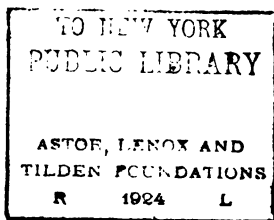
*W. H. D. 1884*

AND  
OTHER POEMS









23 South 9<sup>th</sup> St.  
Philadelphia, Pa.

Sept. 10, 1884

My dear Sir,

Nearly all of the men  
to whom I am indebted, by  
example or by precept, for  
pleasure, comfort, or instruction,  
are men whose work is finished,  
and to whom I cannot even hope  
even in a small, faint way to ex-  
press my gratitude. Happily, in one  
case, this is not true; and to one,  
at least, I can say; "I am one  
of the many unknown whom  
you, from your eminent position,  
have made your debtor, by show-  
ing us that a purer patriotism



is not only desirable but possible."

I cannot repay you in kind, neither in degree, but if you will do me the honor to accept a little volume called "The Confessions of Hermes and Other Poems" which I send you, I shall feel that I have done what I can to express my gratitude for your honorable public example. Perhaps gratitude and esteem ought to be silent: if you think so, I beg you to excuse my intrusion and to cast aside my volume.

Very Sincerely Yours,

Paul Hervey

To  
George Wm Curtis, Esq.  
Editor Harper's Weekly.





*In R.D.  
H.d.L.  
Dap to his int.  
Lubag. Liddle*

THE  
  
CONFESSIONS OF HERMES  
  
AND OTHER POEMS.

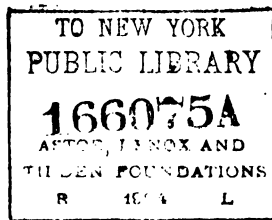
BY  
  
PAUL HERMES.

---

PHILADELPHIA:  
DAVID McKAY, 23 SOUTH NINTH ST.  
1884.

*c. H.*

NEW YORK  
PUBLIC  
LIBRARY



Copyright, 1884.  
DAVID McKAY.

NEW YORK  
PUBLIC LIBRARY  
ASTOR, LENOX AND  
TILDEN FOUNDATIONS

---

*To*  
*ROBERT B.*

---

24x478

---

## ERRATA.

---

Page 65, line 3, for *That* read *Than*.

Page 76, line 17, for *vaste* read *vast*.

Page 113, line 4, for *Art* read *Art's*.

Page 120, line 3, for *scarlet* read *starlet*.

---

## INTRODUCTION.

---

AT a time when much verse is written a new writer may be allowed to state his position, in order that he and the public may understand each other. This can be done in the present case by announcing that the author is a disciple of no school, although he has drawn aid and inspiration from many schools. His aim has not been to imitate classical, or early English or early French worthies, because he believes that the humblest poet should use his own throat, instead of repeating the notes of nobler songsters. The inevitable Present—in which our lives are at stake, in which we love and doubt and hope, in which Passion and Action forever ebb and flow—ought to furnish the most familiar and sympathetic subjects for art. If we overcome To-day, To-morrow will be our ally. Before we turn back to catch the last faint echoes of the Past, let us listen to the strong vital message the Present pours into our ears.

So it happens that the longest poem in this collection records the spiritual development of one modern man. Neither to extenuate

nor to praise nor to suppress, but to speak the truth unflinchingly was my aspiration. If prejudice or prudery has suffered, Truth will give compensation. Of the shorter poems, several have been included because they mark stages in moral growth merely hinted at in "Hermes;" but whether, apart from thus serving to illustrate and to supplement, they possess value, the reader must determine. The purely imaginative pieces need no explanation.

Should this volume reproduce, even faintly, the poet's profound sense of the mystery and pathos and earnestness of life, and his conviction—growing ever stronger—that the realization of Beauty and Happiness waits upon loyalty to Duty, he will feel justified in having offered it to the world. But, though he fail in this, his faith will still abide unshaken, that stronger and worthier lips will try to utter more distinctly the unutterable Truth. This striving for utterance is Poetry, for which, consciously or unconsciously, mankind will listen whilst the Earth remains.

July, 1884.

P. H.

## CONTENTS.

---

	PAGE.
DEDICATION, . . . . .	3
INTRODUCTION, . . . . .	5
HERMES, . . . . .	11
SONG OF THE EARTH-SPIRIT, . . . . .	47
WHAT ANCHORAGE? . . . . .	51
DIVES, . . . . .	52
PAUL, . . . . .	55
PREMONITIONS, . . . . .	67
HOW DEEP IS LOVE? . . . . .	68
PASSION, . . . . .	70
THE MODERN ODYSSEY, . . . . .	72
THE FIRE-FLY, . . . . .	81
THE MUSICIAN'S STORY, . . . . .	82
FATE, . . . . .	88
MANKIND'S HIGHEST, . . . . .	89
THE MYSTERY, . . . . .	90
TO TRUTH, . . . . .	93
MIDSUMMER, . . . . .	94



	PAGE.
THE POWER OF IMPOTENCE, . . . . .	96
THE NEW COLUMBUS. . . . .	97
FAME, . . . . .	99
SYMPATHY, . . . . .	100
JUNE, . . . . .	102
DIRGE, . . . . .	104
IN BEREAVEMENT, . . . . .	105
THE HYMN OF FORCE, . . . . .	106
WORLD-WOE, . . . . .	109
THE REAL VICTOR, . . . . .	119
THE FIRST STAR, . . . . .	120
TO A FRIEND GOING BEYOND THE SEA, . . . . .	121
FAILURE, . . . . .	122
UNWORTHINESS, . . . . .	128
A NEW YEAR'S GREETING, . . . . .	129
TOSSED, . . . . .	131
THE QUESTION, . . . . .	133
FROM THE DEPTHS, . . . . .	134
THE FIRST GUESS, . . . . .	135
INTO THE GLOOM, . . . . .	138

# CONTENTS.

9

	PAGE.
HOPE, . . . . .	141
THE GOD-SEEKERS, . . . . .	142
TO CARPERS, . . . . .	143
THE IMP, . . . . .	144
NOT THE WORLD'S WAY, . . . . .	146
CONCEITS, . . . . .	149
MEN OF LITTLE FAITH, . . . . .	150
EPIGRAPH, . . . . .	153



## HERMES.

### I.

BEHOLD a helpless, unselfconscious babe  
Who tests the world by crucible of taste—  
His Reason to his mouth confined—approves,  
Rejects by simple rule of bitter-sweet.  
He clutches at a sunbeam or a song,  
For to his blurred, uneducated sense  
Hearing and Sight are fused, and Touch controls  
Whatever coaxes him beyond himself.

But lo! he grows and more of life attracts,  
To strength and stature changing food and sleep.  
His world, at first, a breast or cradle bounds,  
His earliest teachers, lullabys and toys.

## II.

O masking season of the human year,  
O Youth! thou clothest in fantastic garb  
What childhood's uncorrupted eyes behold.  
A mist as dazzling as May-morning dew  
Enhances, softens, beautifies each thing.  
No barrier stops, for prudent elders seem  
Our journey plainly to have measured out,  
And we not yet suspect our parents are  
Neither omniscient nor infallible.  
Thoughts and things, into pet phrase condensed,  
Are tangible, immutable and clear.

To God and Satan early introduced,  
Our fancy draws odd portraitures of them:  
We wonder why we meet not God by day,  
And tremble lest by night the cloven-hoof  
Jut from beneath our bed. But if we ask  
Perplexed by many inconsistencies  
About these beings commonly described,

Familiar theme of plodding pious folk  
And theme unvarying of the clergyman,  
The parent says: *Not now, but by-and-by*  
*You'll understand. Believe it 's as I say.*  
And Youth accepts the turn, diverted soon  
By nearer curiosity: forgets himself  
In searching outward things. What he can see  
And handle doth convince. Materialist,  
He doubteth not the dirt his fist can grasp.

He knows the calls of whip-poor-will and quail;  
He wades across the tall wet meadow grass  
To reach the brook where tiger-lilies burn;  
He coveteth the oriole's gray nest  
That like a cobweb on the drooping branch  
Of elm or willow bobs beyond his reach;  
Strange names he gives to animal and bird;  
His scheme of Nature 's not disclosed in books,  
A quilt of truths, half-truths, absurdities—  
A guess audacious going bail for fact.

Each season its peculiar sport suggests:

In winter, ice and snow his playmates are;  
In autumn, with the squirrels he contends  
For tribute that the frost-touched nut-trees bear;  
The August wind blows but to fly his kite,  
And spring has winsome pastimes of her own.

Though oft from school the truant stays away,  
Tell him a story and he 'll not abscond.  
He dreams of Crusoe and, awake, repeats  
Medleys grotesque, part borrowed, part his own—  
Himself the hero of his boyish tale.

The future, should his fancy thither drift,  
Not bleak and plane, a wilderness extends,  
But (like the hill that his horizon walls,  
Where oaks and beeches glimmer in the sun  
As south wind turns their glossy leaf-palms up)—  
'T is near and friendly; there from crest to vale  
Paths trickle brookwise; follow staunchly one  
And though it wind 't will surely reach the top.

Fame is a known, familiar quantity  
Of which are symbols laurel-wreaths and praise,

To be acquired almost by wishing it.

Who needs be warned to shun the monster, Vice?

So hideous he that like the leprous wretch

To look upon him breeds the wish to fly.

How Virtue irresistibly attracts,

Her Eden opens wide where pleasures spring

As fair and frequent as on orange-trees

Buds, flowers, fruits in equal beauty vie.

No hint is needed these delights to choose.

Oh Childhood, of illusions paradise,

Where thoughts, like things, defined and concrete  
bloom

Within the reach of eager wonderers;

No sense of abstract like the snake has coiled

Around your tree of knowledge!



## III.

When whispers first to wondering Childhood's ear,  
Mysterious Sex, dim premonition flits  
Across the boyish mind that he is formed  
For purpose strange, unlike his girlish mates;  
Yet, still he knows not what that purpose is,  
Or whitherwards the difference extends.

Excited once his curiosity,  
He craves no lull, but secretly he pries  
In books and Nature for forbidden lore.  
He gathers, one by one, the divers hints  
By birds and beasts in mating-season dropped;  
He ruminates upon stray sentences  
That, carelessly, unwary elders slipped;  
Until one day the young philosopher  
(Whose parents deem him but an urchin yet)  
Infers unknown from known, and comprehends  
Why he is heir to a peculiar power.

The child, unnoticed, has become a youth:

Vague yearnings brush him with their downy wings,  
His fancy tickle, and uncaught escape.  
Unrest and incompleteness unavowed he feels,  
Not yet suspecting where to seek and find  
Completion and repose. How bashfully  
He greets the girl with whom last year he romped !  
He kissed her boldly then ; now blushing, shy  
He notes her rounding form,—her motion,—face.  
A sudden charm has blossomed on her lips—  
O were he breath to pass that ruby gate !—  
A message new and deep her eyes convey,  
A delicate allurement vibrates with  
The gentle fluctuation of her breast.  
How came she by these unexpected charms ?  
Once, to have had to play with her alone  
He would have sulked ; but now the simple thought  
Of telling her three commonplace remarks  
Sends lusty blood to dance in ev'ry vein.  
When last he looked she was a girl—no more—  
Pitied because she could not run or climb,

Or toss a ball, or whip a buzzing top.  
Of purity and grace a revelation,  
Incarnate proof of supercarnal charms,  
Now like a goddess dazzles she his sight.  
Not flesh she seems, but token spiritual  
To be adored, and paid an idol's dole,  
By worshipper disinterested, pure,  
Who counts possession sacrilege.

A little while and Sex more bluntly speaks.  
Worship and visions satisfy no more:  
The opposite must opposite oppose;  
Unlike, alone, can quell unlike's revolts.

The youth, astonished, looks again, and sees  
In her his childhood's desultory mate,  
The incarnation of his vague desires;  
His dream's original, his quest's reply.

Life's eldest rite they sacrifice anew.  
Sex conquers, and another generation  
Is from the future like a barrier rolled.

## IV.

Who can remember when suspicions first  
Fell flakelike on his mind that Outward may  
Not one with Inward be: that Substance hides  
Deep underneath the subterfuge of Form,  
Whose ever-changing mantle Color is?

As on the margin of a clover patch,  
Sweet honey-quarry of the delving bees—  
A wind-borne sorrel seed unnoticed drops,  
Finds favor in the soil, sprouts, blossoms, sows  
At autumn many of its kind, until  
Sweet Clover has been driven to banishment,  
The wily strangers have usurped the field,  
And Sorrel, sour, rusty tyrant, reigns;  
So, unperceived, the parent germ of Doubt  
Took lodgment on the outskirts of my mind.

At first the novelty of treading paths  
Unknown and interdicted pleased,  
As fruits forbidden have the sweetest taste,

And curiosity not yet content  
With all the miracles before it spread  
Must pry beneath the tiniest screening lid.  
Our adolescent zeal despises laws,  
The cruel hedge of nettles custom plants  
To keep all footsteps in one narrow way;  
The eldest bud of knowledge is conceit  
Since Wisdom is the ripe autumnal fruit.  
So I inquisitive, and young and vain,  
Willingly listened even at the Church  
When Doubt began to catechize me thus:  
    "How know you this is true? What proof can  
        bring?  
Has God to you appeared? Have you beheld  
The paradise they talk so glibly of?  
For knowledge of your destiny and God  
Must you depend upon the evidence  
Of Jewish patriarchs and husbandmen—  
Dust blown by Syrian winds for ages past?  
By what decree may they prescribe your faith  
And bid you use their eyes to look on life?

Had they alone the right to gauge the needs  
Of all the races of the after-world?  
Have you no sight, no senses of your own?  
In all the earth burns there no bush for you?"

More frequent with my prying grew my doubts.  
I noticed flaws in what should flawless be:  
And as when on a friend's defects we brood  
They swell and swell eclipsing his good traits,  
The common creed by which men lived and died  
Appearing to me rather spots than sun,  
I held it cheaper than a Grecian myth.  
Each race, I saw, hath had its proper faith  
Lofty or low, according to the times:  
No creed so foul, but for it martyrs died,  
No fiend so vile, but some have called it God.  
Why then should I, born an American,  
In Earth's full prime, a Hebrew sponsor choose,  
Who lived by Jordan when the Earth was green?  
I'll keep the morals but dismiss the creed.

Seen in philosophers I found allies  
 Who lost the weapons to exterminate  
 The lingering remnant of my childish faith.  
 With Logic's blade I could dissect a thought  
 Or solve a dilemma. Parry and thrust delight  
 The weak who stops not to inquire the cause  
 But let his clapping to the fencers' skill.

Swelling in imagined liberty  
 I found that vast superstitious lore  
 Of the ancients in those learned men  
 Who declared they seek no goal but Truth  
 And yet sought no guide but common-sense.  
 I found in it reason to its end;  
 A method in argument groped,  
 No living light but philosophic clue,  
 Struggle to find upon the shore of Truth:  
 My youth has that never seen that shore  
 Whence the waves now black now jocund seemed,  
 Whence in its measure rage or laughter:  
 For when the willow I recalled

Some chasm that my philosopher had spanned  
By unexplained—imaginary bridge.

First disappointment, then incensement ruled.  
“Tricksters,” I cried, “count me your dupe no more,  
Let those who will be by your frauds deceived,  
Confess black, white, say falsehood speaks the truth!  
I the invisible henceforth forswear:  
Science alone shall show me naked Truth.”



## V.

Nature I found an echo to each cry.  
No creed so mad but draws support from her  
Whose arguments serve fool and sage alike.

One preacheth men have no escape from Fate,  
And instances her laws inexorable,  
By which the seasons march and rivers pulse—  
Night chases day—the large commands the small,  
And not a speck dares swerve or disobey.

Another glorifies that man is free,  
And Nature still lends semblance to his creed:  
For Reason guideth not the brutes to mount  
The hindrances of neighborhood and time,  
Absorbing forces from both friends and foes.  
But men have Reason to achieve their work,  
While Conscience judges, be it good or bad;  
And he who will not need not choose the wrong.

Some say, again, that God is fair and good.

And straightway point to bending fields of grain,  
To stintless orchards and productive herds.  
How plenty followeth the fattening rain!  
How fast seeds sprout, fruits ripen, grass turns hay!  
What quick'ning balm the south and west winds fetch!  
What secret virtue night in dew distils!  
How ev'ry hour and ev'ry circumstance  
Desire to speed the earthly paradise;  
And God, the chemist of the universe,  
Omnipotent, benevolent and just,  
For man's delight, incessantly combines  
The atoms in unnumbered benefits!

“T is false,” the mildewed pessimist rejoins.

“This worst of worlds is hell; its fire is pain;  
Damnation is the act of taking breath.  
Behold the merciless volcano drown  
Cities and States beneath its molten tide,  
Behold the tempest and the flood destroy,  
Behold the earthquake—ere you twice can wink—  
To ruin hurl what men in ages built;

Behold insatiate and remorseless plagues  
Manure the land with mounds of rotting men ;  
Behold the endless struggle to survive,  
Where, without choice, all creatures must engage ;  
Behold the universal blight of pain,—  
And then assert, if still assert you dare,  
That God is good, and justly sways the world.”

“O joy! O hope!” cries one in ecstasy.

“In ev’ry act of Nature we discern  
A symbol of man’s immortality.  
The seed becomes the tree, the egg, the bird,  
And tree and bird themselves perpetuate,  
Not singly, but in forests and in flocks.  
So, likewise, mounts our deathless soul  
From life to life, outspreading as it soars.  
What death we call is quitting low for high.”

“Woe and despair!” exclaims a doleful wretch.

“On Nature look and learn that all is vain.  
The loveliest blossom shrivels while we gaze—  
The mountains crumble—seas evaporate—

The victor species that exults to-day,  
To-morrow shall forget—and man himself  
The topmost flower upon life's stem shall fade,  
For all is emptiness and vanity!"

Thus Nature, fickle flatterer you hold  
Your glass before the eager eyes of men :  
Each in the mirror looks and sees—himself.

## VI.

I walk desponding through the city streets,  
A drama reading in each passer's face,  
And on each feature founding fresh despair.

See yonder ragged slouch, with hang-dog look;  
Upon the corner shifting with the sun  
He loaf's through vacant hours. He never knew  
The rare ennoblement of honest work,  
But dissipates what wife and children earn.  
See in that countenance approaching now  
How currish envy's outwardly revealed  
In sneering lips and unstraightforward glance.  
He hates what other men esteem because  
He cannot say '*Tis mine*. Nought's good or fair  
Because he measures all by ownership;  
Yet e'en possession no content bestows  
Because *I want* forever chokes *I have*.  
How icily that woman clad in silk

Denies the beggar at her carriage-door,  
As if 't were blasphemy for starving lips  
To raise a prayer to diamond-guarded ears.  
Pride can forgive all crimes save poverty.  
Turn, Starveling, turn away: no more offend  
My lady's sight. See, with what grace she greets  
Her winy-cheeked and bulging-bellied friend,  
In whom behold the sum of many feasts,  
Epitome of dainty food and drink.  
Our human life he knows as worms know books—  
By eating. Heaven he thinks a state where gout  
May enter not. Upon his chyle depends  
His moral scheme. Now near him meanly glides  
His hungry, threadbare, wizened counterpart.  
Alert his look as if his fancy heard  
The distant coaxing clink of gold; his claws  
Convulsively the whimsey coins clutch;  
His sordid eyes glow brighter valuing  
Imaginary yellow heaps. He starts!  
Despair has blanched his parchment cheeks:

He fancies thieves are plundering his hoards—  
He runs. Haste home, old Pennygrab, haste home,  
And count again your stocking-swelling wealth.  
Mark yonder living effigy of lust.  
Effrontery upon his forehead leers,  
Concupiscence begets his shameless stare,  
His sensual lips make words of bawdy thoughts.  
Like ravening cannibal upon his prey,  
He gloats upon each unsuspecting woman.  
Each look, each wish, commits adultery.  
Quick, draw aside, for hither the police  
Drag jailwards a resisting brute, whose hands,  
And face and clothes, convicting blood besmears.

Am I then like to these? Are they not men?  
Shall I complacently the doctrine preach  
It matters not how many mortals sin  
If I am destined for immortal joy?  
So cheap are sinners that one spirit saved  
Outvalues scores of damned? Why saved? Why  
damned?

If Goodness drew the universal plan  
And had, beside the love of perfect things,  
The pow'r to cause perfection, how explain  
The ineradicable taint of sin?  
If every creature born of woman shall  
At last be perfect, why so long delay  
The godly consummation? Why vouchsafe  
Amid our woe no jot of blessedness?  
If we predestined are to overcome  
These evil earthly passions, why torment  
Our souls by this unnecessary war?  
If all that is, is right, virtue and vice  
Have equal privilege, and they who boast  
Of progress waste their worthless breath:  
But if we grant the world might better be  
How reconcile the permanence of wrong  
With sway of ruler who prefers the right?  
The dread dilemma drives us to despair.



## VII.

Ten thousand nights we walk beneath the sky,  
And hardly note the stars uncatalogued :  
They mean no more than distant points of light—  
Mere cinders sown by the departed sun.  
A bursting rocket spills a constellation  
Brighter and richer than Orion's own.  
But lo ! there comes a night when sparks no more  
But worlds and suns, innumerable and vast,  
These suddenly become : imagination  
Recoils and shudders in bewilderment ;  
A feeble sense of awful magnitude  
And volume permeates the mind until  
We wonder that the tiny human skull  
Cracks not and frees the too-expansive thought.

Then, more than vastness, system terrifies.  
Each of those molten orbs through space must plunge :  
So swiftly that the mind, computing, fails ;  
Each must pursue a preconcerted path,

Nor deviate by breadth of spider's thread:  
Let but an atom in the farthest star  
Be jostled from its necessary poise  
And all the stars must, like an avalanche,  
Crash into chaos through the black abyss.

Appalled I turned for comfort to the Earth:  
But do not here the swerveless laws obtain?  
And does not here the microscope reveal  
A world of equally amazing size,  
Beyond the smallest comprehension small?  
Evades the drop the law the orb obeys?

Summer, I saw, must scorch the wreath of spring;  
Autumn each flow'r to fruit must modify;  
Winter must give recuperative pause;  
Night must with day its endless see-saw tilt;  
The rose in vain begs mercy of the frost:  
No wish, no pray'r, ekes out the dearest life.

I am a man shackled without reprieve  
To ev'ry passion that degrades man's sex.  
I know not what forgotten ancestor,  
My traits determined ere I was conceived;  
Nor is 't enough that I am bowed beneath  
The load heredity and sex amass,  
For I must bear the added burdens of  
My country's foibles and my time's defects.

Why should the innocent be forced to pay  
A parent's debts of ignorance or sin  
By crippling ill or tendency to crime?  
Why should the guiltless wear the curse of guilt?

If a March wind should blow a crystal drop,  
That clings and trembles on a budding twig,  
Into the swollen muddy stream beneath,  
'Twere idle to complain because the drop  
Sucking the foulness of the tawny flood  
Resistlessly from view were by it hurled.  
I am a drop through life blown helplessly

By the inexorable blast of Fate.

His are my wish, my act, my inmost thought:

If I do sin 't was Fate that sinned through me;

If virtue practice, Fate be praised, not me.

O Destiny, thou heartless, deaf machine  
Whose cruel monstrous wheels forever grind  
Directed by no purpose save unrest,  
Incessantly creating but to kill,  
Thy brutish turn in terror I behold,  
I curse and crave the doom I cannot fly.

O hidden awful power take back my life.  
I asked it not at first: how could I ask?  
What then was I? Before my soul was tied  
To plummet flesh had I a soul? Was I?  
Must I inevitably welter now  
Through carnal slime by plummet dragged for aye,  
As in a marrow-chilling dream, a fiend  
In spite of agonized resistance tugs  
His victim down the unobstructed pit?

I'm only free to know I am not free.  
If live I must the consciousness destroy  
That, singly, I am doomed with fate to wage  
A battle lost, ere fought. Either submit  
That I, consenting dupe, believe myself  
In feint allowed to make my wishes, acts;  
Or else decree that I, insensible,  
May like a bubble peep, expand and burst  
On life's abhorrent flood.

The soulless worm is born, begets and dies;  
Man in the younger days was but a worm.  
If now the worm's last favor is the dust  
What loftier end awaits his cousin, man?  
Come diverse lots from common origin?

Wherefore attach a spectral show of might  
To impotence? Why the frail delude  
To think itself immutable and firm?  
Why tease the mortal with immortal dreams?

## VIII.

Again I studied life from germ to man :  
Saw how the restless generative will,  
Not satisfied with one expression, speaks  
Through double sex and four embodiments.  
I traced the lineage of created things ;  
Pursued the brute, till fish and flesh were one ;  
Then followed flesh till plant's disguise he wore ;  
Beheld the simple multiple become ;  
Perceived in man the elements of all ;  
Glimpsed in the worst a promise of the best ;  
Supplied by fancy necessary links,  
Until at last, in speechless wonder held,  
I strove to grasp the overwhelming whole.  
But whether I began at base or top  
Elusively the vast conception quivered ;  
Whether particular or type I chased  
From sense it always vanished mockingly.  
When to their lair the atoms home I pressed

And clutched, exultant, empty was my palm.  
Faint, tantalizing voices whispered near  
*In vain, in vain; no hand can us contain!*

When after years of friendship free and pure  
The friend turns treacherous upon whose worth  
You would have pledged, without a qualm, your  
life,

In spite of wounded confidence and pride  
You still can borrow strength from memory  
And shed across the darkness of your grief  
The dim sad light of recollected joy.  
Not so, not so the seeker after truth  
To whom the dread suspicion grows to fact  
That Truth, like all the rest, illusion is.  
Even a father, by his child betrayed,  
When he, bewildered, sees his very flesh  
Proved counterfeit, feels not such agony  
As one who learns his faith was founded on  
An unsubstantial and deceptive IF.

Science, alas! thou hast no corner-stone

More adamantine than a theory.

Thou canst not tell whereon the tortoise rests:

Admit the tortoise, thou wilt rattle off

Volleys of learning on the thickness of

His shell, and size and number of his legs:

But I'll admit established facts alone.

Behold, the roots of facts are hid in thoughts.



## IX.

I must, my Love ! be happy here with thee,  
At last must Pleasure, sought in many shapes,  
Halt on his wild phantasmagoric flight,  
Abide in thee, and years of Pain atone.  
With love still present life were still a boon  
Though we reluctantly resigned belief  
In spirit, immortality and God.

Was ever perfect afternoon like this ?  
The summer air, not hot or chill, is sweet  
With mingled fragrance of wild forest flowers ;  
The swarms of leaves upon the patient trees  
Spread their green wings, to shield us from the sun ;  
The murmur indistinct of creatures small  
Sings treble to the streamlet's soothing bass,  
Which, now and then, a bird's cry oversounds.

How soft the moss, but softer is thy lap  
Where my head nestles ; softer is thy touch

As dreamily thy fingers stroke my brow.  
Thy sway ecstatic, as breath ebbs and flows,  
A lulling sense of rhythmic motion brings.  
(This must be happiness! But could I choose  
Forever thus to undulate?—ah no!)  
Bend nearer, Darling; so. I see thine eyes—  
Deep, glistening wells of heaven-reflected blue—  
Report unconsciously heart messages.  
And now thy loosened hair, like sunbeam fringe,  
Falls tenderly around my face and neck,  
Each golden thread imparting on my cheeks  
A thrill impassioned. Faster throbs my heart,  
And in my veins a spasm of yearning burns:  
Quick, ruby lips! quick, pliant form! O bliss!

Stir not, my Love, but cleaving breast to breast,  
Press close until we quell dividing space,  
Until our thoughts commingle liberally,  
And I become, O joy! a part of thee!

Alas! impossible! though bodies join,  
A film impervious veileth mind from mind.  
I clasp thee, Sweet, but I am still alone!

## X.

O anguish inexpressibly acute  
Of him who wakes to know his faith is dead !  
A glory filled the universe last night  
As awfully he watched the setting sun :  
To-day in desperation he beholds  
A ghastly wilderness bereft of God.

I do not understand how men consent  
In mute despair to suffer. Does not Death,  
More merciful than Life, a thousand paths  
To endless sleep suggest ? Does not repose  
Sweeten each drop of pang-curtailling poison ?  
No Hamlet's dread of something after death  
Restrains the abject, sunk below the choice  
Of life or death : he does not choose, he bears.

How long I lay in misery supreme  
Like plank that's water-logged in stagnant pool,  
Despair must tell—I shudder to recall.

## XI.

O to return to childhood's simple faith !  
'T were better worship Superstition's god  
Than trust in none ! O might I see again  
Those days when nestled in a mother's arms  
The world seemed impotent to reach with harm,  
And the dear magnet of a mother's heart  
Drew childish terror tenderly away !

Impossible ! No life may backward turn.  
Cold sods divide my mother's heart from mine ;  
Reason and faith refuse to be compelled ;  
And superstition that has been unmasked  
May dupe no more—not even those who will.

The last hope vanished even while I hoped.  
Dogma and Science, Pleasure, Friendship, Love,—  
Each had I tested, each I wished would pour  
A final balm upon my aching soul ;

But though death had been sweeter, truth compelled

To each the desperate acknowledgment

*Thou bringest no relief! I suffer still.*

“What force,” I asked, “against my will can thus

Drive me incessantly from perch to perch

And sternly whisper *Here thou mayst not rest?*

By what divine immutable command

Is self-deception not allowed to me?

Whence sprang this fixed confessed authority

Which strict obedience stubbornly exacts

Though happiness on disobedience waits?”

Then Truth herself, for she it was, replied:

“No preacher hath possessed my sacred right;

It emanated from no scholar's brain;

It was not kissed by love from lips to lips;

It comes and goes not after man's desires.

Grope thou no longer in external night;

No more in other folk thy answer seek;

Thy neighbor's measure serveth not for thee.  
The Inward only can the Outward solve;  
To know the world, know first thyself within."

## SONG OF THE EARTH-SPIRIT.

THINK you my little man, tiny earth-scamperer,  
That in your desperate struggle with death  
You can escape from him, you can prolong your days  
When at the outset you squander your breath?

Wherefore this vehemence? why this uneasiness?  
Vast must your labor be, urgent your need:  
I too am busied with work of importance, but  
Prudence forbids me to dash at your speed.

Units you reckon by, millions my units are,  
Yet though I hurry not when was I late?  
When did not morning send night into banishment?  
When failed the summer to rule her estate?

Trifles disparaging, only a master-piece  
Worthy you deem of your bubble-like term;  
I who have numberless ages to labor in  
Am not too haughty to fashion a worm.



Throw me an acorn: I seem not to notice it,  
Silent receive it, but never forget;  
When you are ashes your grandsons are shaded by  
Forest of oak-trees not fully-grown yet!

Thus I to-day complete, careless to-morrow of;  
All things are dear to me, nought I despise;  
Countless disguises I put on and frolic in,  
Seeing myself through a myriad eyes.

Emptiness know I not: idle no atom is:  
New shapes advance when the old shapes retreat;  
Blight and decadence I never will tolerate;  
Patterns I spurn for I never repeat.

Nothing is waste to me, nothing I dissipate;  
Loosed the old figures, I model the new;  
Yesterday's violets tinge the clouds purple now,  
They will to-morrow give women's eyes hue.

Sleep though my creatures must, sleepless and vigilant

Infinite projects I weigh and revolve;  
Watch I unceasingly all my creations, and  
Death I despatch the unfit to dissolve.

Tranquil my breathing is; continents tunefully  
Lift up their heads from the ocean that hides,  
Flourish an epoch and vanish then phantom-like  
Into the waves when my bosom subsides.

Races men dream not of Eden again shall find  
Where now my deepest sea's cradled in slime;  
Peaks that now highest peer coldly and haughtily,  
Surely my billows shall conquer and climb.

Look at my foster-child, Moon, blanched and spectre-like,  
Madly she ran her race, soon did she die;  
Once she was beautiful, once life delighted her,  
Now, but a corpse she is hurled down the sky.

When I am turbulent into the night I look

Planets and stars I see, holding their way;

Calm and majestic they satisfy destiny,

Never a movement of haste or delay.

"Sister," their message is, "only the narrow ones

Fit their endeavors to man's meagre years:

We have eternity for our accomplishments,

Let them be worthy of time-scorning spheres."

## WHAT ANCHORAGE?

THE winds that fan in Hindustan  
Would burn the cheek in Labrador;  
The rustic's smiles and awkward wiles  
When Venus comes allure no more.

Who hath but seen his village green  
By tales of city is not won;  
His native hill and brook are still  
His Everest and Amazon.

To him whose eyes whets not Surprise,  
Who common deems the awful plan,  
This Earth appears a vale of tears,—  
His God is but a larger man.

## DIVES.

SEE, how quiet he lies! His fine-fed cheeks are white,  
His chilly eyes are sealed, and his lips are frozen  
tight;

You may feel of his icy wrist and listen to hear his  
breath—

In vain; he has turned to clay at the touch of the  
wand of death.

They called him a merchant prince—a wizard of  
golden schemes

Whence dollars flowed into his purse in steadily  
swelling streams.

He sat high up in his church; his name was mighty  
in trade;

He bragged with a surly pride of the money he  
shrewdly made.

Was he generous? Question the poor, whose life-  
blood washed him gold.

Was he tender? His sister ask, tottering, beggarly  
old.

Was he loved? Thrust down your ear and note if  
any one bless:

Yet the city boastfully prates of her prominent son's  
success.

See, how quiet he lies! his hypocritical leer  
Froze to a look of fright, as his enemy, Death, drew  
near;

And his insolent scolding voice quavered into a cry  
As he begged his hired nurse that she would not let  
him die.

They will bury his dust in pomp though never a  
tear be shed,  
And over his yawning grave a lying praise will be  
said.

But stay ! ere they bear him hence like a favorite son  
of the land,  
Open and see what he hides in his close-contracted  
hand.

What, empty ? and was it for this you groveled those  
seventy years,  
Buying and selling human hearts, bartering human  
tears ?  
Empty ? not even a cent for bribing Death to delay ?  
In spite of your sordid wealth, like a beggar you  
steal away !

## PAUL.

Paul, a young American painter in Rome, writes to his betrothed  
in the United States.

MY DEAR, I cannot work to-day; my brush  
Is clumsy as a broom; my paints refuse  
To mingle in the mystic melody  
Which Art translates by color. I despair  
When I behold the pigments dull and few  
Which must my Fancy's myriad colors paint—  
So small the palette and so vast the scene!

I went this morning to the Vatican  
And saw again what Raphael reveals.  
Who else like him possessed the gift divine  
Of putting on his canvas holiness?  
He used no colors sensible to touch,  
But purity and grace and piety.  
He was the first, he was the last to show



That these poor features of our human face,  
Whereon disease and frowns and passions bad  
Most often darkle, are still apt and fit  
The godlike and immortal to express;  
As on the battered mountain cheek may glow  
The everlasting freshness of the morn.

When wonder, gratitude and worship pass,  
Deep sadness follows if too long I brood  
Upon these revelations. "Why," I ask,  
"Should I my years in bungler's work exhaust,  
When here the perfect visibly abides?  
Why fight a battle when defeat is sure?  
Could I perpetuate one form, one face,  
Nay, but a single hand, original,  
I had not lived in vain; yet Raphael  
With his creations might repeople Rome."

Downhearted from the master's blaze I come,  
Made by his splendor, dim. Then grateful hope

Revives, and Nature thrusts before my sight  
Objects which draw to self-forgetfulness.  
Where'er I look enticing beauties start.  
A happy beggar basking in the sun;  
A woman's features seamed with tell-tale lines  
Which sympathetic eyes can understand;  
A shaven, black-chinned priest, fat monument  
To man's unflagging love of being duped;  
An ancient arch, wherein are still asleep,  
Cradled on moss, the shadows Cæsar saw;  
A momentary glimpse of mountain crests,  
Distant and blue, with city streets for frame;—  
Such sights—yes, all my casual glances skim  
Brings blessedness and beauty to my soul,  
And passionately pleads, like lips I love,  
That I will make its glory permanent.

The artist is unselfish. What hath been  
A truth to him, and joy, he must impart,  
(Although the freshness fade, the charm escape),

To others by his pen or tone or brush.  
And so, I try and fail—alas! I fail.  
With each endeavor something vanishes,  
Leaving the picture lifeless as a ghost,  
Until despondent, baffled, teased, beset,  
The blind I envy, who are screened from sight  
Of beauty matchless, irresistible,  
Which whispers, *Show me to your fellow-men,*  
But like a phantom mocks and melts away.  
Believe me, Dearest, few indeed suspect  
The agony and joy of artist's souls,  
In whom each sense is delicate and quick  
To take true messages of outward things,  
But for imparting useless, blockish, dumb.

You, Dearest, in your transatlantic nook,  
Cannot conceive how beautiful is Rome.  
At first, I grant, slight disappointment may,  
Like a March gust in June, bechill your flowers  
Of red enthusiasm. You may e'en ask,

Are these prim palaces, these gaudy shops,  
These noisy cabs, that whirr of distant mills,  
That shriek impatient of the speeding train—  
Are these my Rome? Then day by day will creep  
The truth upon your quick receptive sense.  
You'll see the marble of those palaces  
Was quarried by the masters of the world;  
Those streets you'll man again with victor hosts,  
And up the Sacred Way you'll watch appear  
The chariot of Cæsar—he of all  
Antiquity the most imperial man,  
And when you've marked the ruins that remain—  
Of arch and temple, theatre and tomb,  
Of palace, sewer, aqueduct and bath—  
As the anatomist expertly draws  
A mastodon by pattern of a bone,  
From these vast fragments you'll rebuild old Rome,  
Huge, solid, cruel, sensual, superb.  
Even this is not the Rome that artists love,  
This crumbling skeleton of long-spent force

Which harnessed once the globe in precedents,  
And drove the nations like a herd of kine.  
Neither is Peter's city what we love,  
An heirloom of man's ignorance and fear,  
The stage whereon pride, avarice and lust  
Have worn the mask of piety and truth,  
And crafty quacks have peddled cures for souls.

No: 't is the Rome of Art we worship here,  
Not that of Superstition, nor of Force.  
For what is Art but Truth? It serves no sect,  
But shines as pure and liberal as the sun.  
On the Pantheon's sky-like dome we gaze,  
And on St. Peter's equal paragon,  
And know their builders were in spirit kin.  
Go look upon the Dying Gaul, and then  
Upon a Virgin Mother of my Raphael,  
And tell me which was Christian, Pagan which;  
Which truly wrought, which wrought and left a lie:  
You cannot tell, for both alike are true.

'T is not the theme, 't is not the creed we see:

---

'T is the expression of truths ever fresh  
When creeds shrink into myths, and themes are trite.  
Since men were men Beauty has been divine,  
The senses' mortal hint of godlike things,  
The momentary portent of perfection.  
Charge you the rose with being infidel?  
I think it always is most orthodox—  
Always devouter than man's current creed.

    This is the true, the grand, the artists' Rome.  
Here we commune with those immortal souls  
Who left for us—ineffable bequest!—  
Their master-works of color and of form.  
And here we tread the very streets they trod,  
Behold the self-same sky and purple hills,  
Yet cannot see the miracles they saw,  
Since Beauty lives not in the object seen,  
But in the looker's eye.

    And so, my Dear, I marvel, dream and hope,

Doubt and despair. I scorn what I have done,  
And forthwith do what I again must scorn,  
Until so insignificant I feel,—  
A feeble urchin scooping in the sand  
Another cradle for the boundless sea—  
That my ambition shrivels, efforts fade,  
And I and Rome, and all mankind, and Earth,  
Shrink to a speck of dust, a moment's whim,  
Before the world's eternal majesty,  
The awful and mysterious Universe.  
Thinking thereon, Reason and Fancy fail,  
And tears, I know not bode they grief or joy,  
Attest the thwarted, overpowered brain.

But, Dearest, when the swooning sense returns,  
The thought of Thee absorbs all other thoughts—  
How small the Universe compared to Thee!  
Then Art, the true interpreter of Love,  
Sweet comfort whispers, bids me live and work,  
And shows the spectre of my hope fulfilled.  
Dreamwise I drink the tonic draught of Fame,

Forefeel I shall be great, and when the world  
Extols a masterpiece by Painter Paul  
There is a face I love beyond the sea  
Shall blush with pride, there is a heart shall dance,  
And lips unheard shall say, '*Tis he, my Paul!*

ot.

've wrought

Thee

l States,

r marvels.

;

bulent,

ys;

size,

;

al,

uch his heart.

ink of thee



Still waiting for an ample voice to tell,  
Still waiting for an ample eye to see,  
All that thou art, part that thou shalt become,  
The mighty wish almost bestows the power.  
I hear the murmur of unwritten songs  
So sweet, so true, on harmony so poised,  
Millions shall love them in the days to come:  
Yet though I hear, I cannot close repeat.  
And ah! what miracles of shape and hue  
He might behold, Columbia, in thy ways,  
Whose sense were apt and adequate  
To find the essence underneath the shell,  
To pierce the godlike underneath the clay!  
What portraits might he paint who clearly saw  
In ev'ry face a masterpiece of mind,  
Which line by line completes an outward mask  
Of character, built thought by thought within!

Why should we tarry with the past and dead.  
To copy faces other ages saw?

Have we no models, present and alive ?  
Is a remembered pleasure more intense  
That pleasure as it thrills ? were skies more blue,  
Sunbeams more bright, women more beautiful  
When Titian painted, centuries ago,  
Than these to-day ? Is any briefest hour  
Inadequate, unrounded, incomplete ?  
Lavishing riches with a spendthrift's hand,  
Is life a mother, fickle and unjust,  
Who loves one epoch like a first-born son,  
A bridal joy for whom the best is mean,  
While other epochs, beggarly, despised,  
She leaves like foster-children in neglect  
To starve and die, with craving unappeased ?  
Does Beauty for a season disappear  
From Earth, until the strongest mortal ken  
And heart most earnest seek for her in vain,  
As one might seek for daisies at the Pole,  
Or tender kisses on dead lover's lips ?  
Are we condemned to live, compelled to know

The glory of the richly-gifted past,  
Suspect the greatness of the years to be,  
Yet doomed to be nor glorious nor great?  
No! Virtue, Truth and Beauty vanish not:  
They onward haste so fleet and fresh  
That the slow idle world discerns them not;  
And but the foremost few who in each age  
Pursue the chase with undiminished zeal  
Still keep in sight the heavenward messengers.

So, Dearest, I abide in Rome awhile,  
To learn, if may be, how the masters old  
Came not unlaureled from their splendid race.  
And then to Thee and to my native land,  
Equipped for Art and Love, I shall return.

---

° Weitzman, Abraham  
*see his later name* Weitz, Abraham.

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS REFERENCE

Users of depository catalogs should note that references may be to Library of Congress secondary entries which do not appear as headings in depository catalogs.

X 50-17575

## PREMONITIONS.

HAVE you ever felt your heart heave fast,  
And the tears rush into your eyes,  
And a sense of victory flood your soul  
As the sunlight floods the skies?

And you cannot tell why your heart exults,  
Or whence those strange tears rise,  
But you feel though you age with a thousand worlds  
That Youth beyond them lies.

## HOW DEEP IS LOVE?

ERE now I never knew

The mystery of love.

'T is more than to be true;

'T is tenderness above;

'T is not to prize thy face

As riches I possess;

'T is not to praise thy grace;

'T is not thy lips to press;

'T is not to fetch thee gift

Thy thanking smile to earn;

'T is not myself to lift

That thou my worth mayst learn:

True love is more than this,  
More than the vague desire,  
More than the burning kiss,  
More than the passions' fire.

When truth my soul shall fill  
With selflessness divine,  
So that I do thy will  
And feel that it is mine;

When I become so pure  
That thou shalt always find  
Thy noblest wish endure  
Within my heart enshrined;

When I thy rights revere  
As human law above,  
Then I shall have no fear  
To tell thee that I love.

## PASSION.

**HEART**, to be able to feel her heart beating !  
Tongue, to be worthy one secret to speak !  
**Eyes**, but to fathom in hers life's completing !  
Lips, O to burn at the touch of her cheek !

She is so spotless and earnest and tender,  
Mighty as virtue, yet gentle as grace;  
What sort of service to her could I render ?  
How could I dare to look up in her face ?

Little suspects she my wishes surround her—  
Loyalest wishes to guard at her side !  
Little she thinks in my heart I have crowned her—  
Silence and distance and years us divide !

Do I pursue but an exquisite vision ?

Is she a phantom my fancy has bred ?

Shall I awake from my dreaming elysian

Only to find my old self in her stead ?

Beautiful spirit-love ! ages may sunder ;

Parted, new lives in new worlds may be past.

Thou hast disclosed me the infinite wonder,

Certain I am to be worthy at last.



## THE MODERN ODYSSEY.

WILL you follow me through space?  
Mount a star-beam, join the race,  
Loose the nerve-twined cord of sense,  
Drop the carnal wrappage, dense,  
Fancy shall our pilot be,  
Cosmical, surprising, free.  
Quibbling Reason, be thou still—  
Put to us no question chill:  
While thou panting lagg'st behind,  
In a logic-net confined,  
Frolic Fancy at a bound  
Truth unperishing hath found.

Quick! bestride the lucent steed!  
Time we shall no longer need;  
Day and darkness one appear  
When the mighty suns are near.  
Earthly measures, bounds, forget,

Let no finite mem'ry fret;  
Pluck away the dread of death—  
Fancy hangs not on a breath!

Ready, up, farewell! But slow  
At beginning let us go,  
Else the Earth would dart from sight  
Like a cinder in the night.  
Watch the plains and mountains shrink.  
Yonder straggling blotch, like ink,  
Is a city; millions thrive  
In that brick and granite hive:  
Dwindled to a speck, a spot,  
Trifle, now we see thee not!

Upward still! that little cloud  
Veils a nation vast and proud:  
Each wee mortal creeping there  
Thinks his home the nook most fair  
Of the universe,—nay, more,

Counts himself the world before;  
Ev'rything was made for him,  
God exists to please his whim.

Earth now shrivels to a ball;  
Shadows o'er its surface fall,  
Marking where the moon-drawn sea  
From the continents is free.

Up! but yet a moment turn  
Just to note where drifts astern,  
On the ether's billows dull,  
Luna's hideous, pitted skull.

See, where burning fiercely blue  
Sun uplifts his disc to view;  
Mottled like chameleon's back,  
Now 't is bright, and now is black;  
Heat he spurts in flaming plumes  
Or in hissing pools consumes,

While he greedily devours  
Pelting meteoric showers.

As the phosphorescent wake  
Vessels on the ocean make  
Spreads and gleams and goes astray,  
So above the Milky Way,  
Eddies and meanders far—  
Ev'ry glistening drop a star !  
We its broadest flood will swim  
Where (from here) it looks most slim.

Look how, like a sky of flame,  
Mighty Sirius hurls his frame !  
He the nearest hapless orbs  
As the sea, the rain, absorbs.  
Zenith scorches in his flight;  
Nadir quivers molten white;  
Whirlwinds shriek behind his path  
Louder than hell's fabled wrath.

Whither, monster, dost thou wend?  
Waits at last thy course an end?  
Wherefore through the black abyss  
Must thou headlong plunge and hiss?  
Do thy wildernesses burn  
And no compensation earn?

Guess we cannot, wonder vast!  
But shouldst thou plunge trebly fast  
Little man's untrammelled mind  
Instantly would leave behind  
Thy huge hulk; or else would stay  
Thy expanse to mete and weigh.  
Thus, chief glory of the sky,  
Art thou slave to man's small eye!

Here is silence so intense  
That the softest whisper hence,  
Flutt'ring down the vast inane  
(Like hay-fragrance after rain),  
Myriad leagues would penetrate

And **expand** in circles great  
Till the last vibration tired,  
And in far-off **space** expired.

Force conflicting tugs and rides  
Ev'ry atom on all sides;  
Through each mote, as through a glass,  
Rays from stars uncounted pass;  
Yet no jar, no flash destroys  
Ev'ry atom's perfect poise.

If we hurried towards the West,  
Or if Eastward pauseless pressed,  
Never should we meet a sign  
Of a limit or a line :  
When we reached the farthest sun  
Fancy dreams of, but begun  
We should find a farther flight  
With fresh wonders to delight.

Could we stop that sheaf of rays  
Hasting tirelessly through space,  
And the message clearly read,  
We should be amazed indeed:  
For those whizzing blades of light  
From the Earth began their flight  
When the perfect man, the Christ,  
On the cross was sacrificed!

In mysterious fashion how  
Is the Past the Present now!  
How make opposites agree?  
How adjust disparity?  
How the thought of finite blend  
With the infinite no-end?  
How shall Fancy e'er unite  
Rest and motion, dark and light?  
Contradictions interwed,  
And impossible, instead  
Plainly possible appears

Though no mind the problem clears!

Now our cheeks are softly kissed  
By a breeze of stellar mist!  
Peradventure ages hence  
It may live in nerve and sense  
When this mist, the wizard Heat  
Shall ensphere, compact, complete.

Will, then, other Hamlets there  
Love, procrastinate, despair?  
Will new women weep to know  
Unrequited passion's woe?  
Will another manlike race  
Godward, trembling, turn its face;  
Crushed by Circumstance and Time  
Slowly, zig-zag, upward climb,  
Often asking, as on Earth,  
If the prize the pain be worth;  
Often halting to inquire,



Wherefore sweat to struggle higher;  
But as ages circle round  
Still on loftier plane be found?

Wherefore now with anxious eye  
Search the star-encrusted sky?  
Homesick for your native hearth  
Peer you sharply after Earth?  
Brush the shadow from your mind:  
Little Earth we left behind  
Uncomputed time ago.  
Where she is we cannot know.  
Let the tiny plaything spin,  
Like a top, her orbit in,  
Trusting that some later day  
She again fall in our way:  
We towards grander worlds and new  
Gladly will our flight pursue,  
Knowing that, where'er we roam,  
We shall never leave our home.

## THE FIRE-FLY.

A SONG.

At dusk a gadding fire-fly  
In a garden came twinkling by:  
Just for a moment he broke his flight  
On a lily, tall and white.

But the lily was oh! so sweet and fair  
That she charm'd the wingéd twinkler there,  
'Till into her fragrant cup he crept  
And all night long he slept, he slept!

O soulful Lily! O absent Love!  
The cheerless night hangs black above;  
Might I lay my head upon your breast  
Morning should find me still at rest!

## THE MUSICIAN'S STORY.

THIS is the Musician's story—

Simple, for his heart was true:

Music was the only glory,

Only friend he ever knew.

Every year, upon his birthday,

Wrote he down within his score

Some few notes, the only records

Of the seasons gone before.

Every action, every passion,

Every stirring of the heart

He distilled in wondrous fashion,

By the magic of his art.

Thoughts that were denied expression

At the eyes or at the tongue;

Catches of a soul's confession

From a soul's recesses sprung;

Wishes with denials speeding;

Hopes beshadowed by despair;

Doubts, the very sun unheeding;

Undertones of grief and care;—

These that simple, true Musician

Year by year, unwearied, wove

Into harmonies celestial

By his truthfulness and love.

And all sounds therein be sprinkled,

For his spirit told him this—

As the artist's love is noble,

So the universe is his.

Thus, by some unmeasured power,  
He embedded in his tune  
The brisk patter of the shower,  
The tree-whisperings in June;

The soft gossip of the streamlet,  
Ocean's storm-exulting roar,  
And the voices in a dreamlet—  
Heard, we know not where before.

E'en the fragrant blossoms' splendor,  
And the diamond-shafted stars,  
And the moonbeams, pale and tender,  
Were translated in his bars.

For all life, or gay or tragic,  
Music lent him skill to melt  
Into sweet, melodious magic,—  
All he saw and knew and felt.

Pleasureful was his existence,  
 Though encircled by the scorn  
 Of a multitude that wondered  
 Why this useless fool was born.

Still, without a mortal hearer,  
 Every year he wrote his strain,  
 In his music matching nearer  
 Life's beatitude and pain;

Singing on with none to listen—  
 Why should he the deaf world mind?  
 Would the stars not grandly glisten  
 Though the earth-ball swarmed with blind?

He must tell his fateful story,  
 Let his fellows laugh or chide;  
 Truth his key-note, and not glory,  
 Making music 'till he died.

It befell in after ages,

When his name was known no more,

That a master found the pages

Of the old Musician's score:

And his genius, sympathetic,

Felt the elder's magic thrall

As the wary metal rouses

At the far-off magnet's call.

Then he caused the strain symphonic

With all grace to be performed,

That his error-frozen fellows

By its truth-flames might be warmed.

First they heard ethereal laughter

Ripple o'er the sea of sound;

Weariness and grief surged after;

Ecstasy with throbbing bound;

But amid the changes never  
Was the guiding motive stilled,  
Faint and far, or near, it ever  
Underneath the tone-waves thrilled,

Growing tenderer and purer  
As the sound-tide onward rushed,  
Vanishing like angel whispers  
When the symphony was hushed.

Then the hearers, madly swaying  
With the music's vital strife,  
Cried: "This is no fleeting music—  
'T is a master's inmost life."

And that old Musician's secrets  
Circled wider year by year,  
For if one true word be spoken,  
All the world at last will hear.



## FATE.

OVER the edge  
Of a crumbling ledge  
Violets look  
At themselves in the brook,  
Where the water cool  
Sleeps in a pool.

From their tuft of sod  
They peer and nod  
When the first gusts blow  
Them to and fro,  
And shiver the glass  
Of the pool as they pass.

Overbrim the skies  
'Till the torrents rise,  
And over the edge  
Of their native ledge  
The violets sweep  
To the boiling deep.

## MANKIND'S HIGHEST.

A DREAM enticed the Spirit of the Earth,  
And as, in sleep, fantastic shapes he chased,  
The Hours slumbered and the Laws delayed.  
When he awoke, behold ! man's puny race  
He found had in the fleeting interval  
Expired as silently as bubbles burst.  
A smile of pity crossed the Spirit's lips :  
"To think the weaklings, if I nodded, died !  
But, after all," he said, "the tiny imps  
Have startled from me many a hearty laugh.  
My time would drag could I no longer see  
The shifting scenes of Human Comedy."

So men he made anew : and that the new  
Might differ nowise from the elder breed,  
He hunted, 'mid the ruins of the past,  
A book wherein true types of men are drawn,  
And from these patterns he refilled the globe.  
Upon that book, O Shakespeare, was thy name.

## THE MYSTERY.

SILENCE eternal; mysterious dark.  
Sudden and strange a starry spark  
Shoots a beam through barrier space  
'Till another beam it meets on its race.

By this clue united the two stars peep  
Joyously over the raven deep,  
Where Time and Distance, baffled, sleep,  
And only the Infinite watch doth keep.

Tell who will  
The first orb's thrill,  
As it looked out o'er the abysmal black  
And met that friend-ray on its track;

And knew, spite of fathomless space between,  
It had seen a friend and it had been seen,—

Knew that its burning heart was known,  
That it rushed not there in the dark alone ?

\* \* \* \* \*

Out of what dark came you and I ?  
Yesterday, all was blank for me :  
To-morrow, silence again shall be ;  
But to-day your light bids darkness fly.

Did we know each other before this morn ?  
Are we wanderers seeking the self-same goal ?  
Did the spirit of Life, when we were born,  
Two hearts endow with a single soul ?

All mortals to me have hitherto been  
But cunning devices of common clay :  
Your first glance tells me that we are kin—  
I was one before, I am two to-day.

Your glance has riddled the heavy hull  
Of body that wraps my spirit tight:  
O barrier space, O senses dull,  
We have vanquished you, for our souls unite!

In ignorance swaddled I once believed  
In himself is each on earth complete;  
Can the blind compute how they are bereaved  
'Till their eyes the lacking vision meet?

What if it be that in lives to come  
Spirits now veiled shall appear to my soul,  
'Till, no longer a fragment blind and dumb,  
I see and I speak, a perfected whole!

Ah, not to the future's grief or bliss  
May the keenest sight with the wish extend:  
But is there a mystery deeper than this,  
That to-day on the earth I have found a friend?

---

## TO TRUTH.

GOADED by fears, by doubts perplexed,  
By rival gusts of logic vexed,  
Baffled by *whither*, *whence* and *why*,  
To thee, O Truth, to thee, I cry:

“Hide not thy nectar-nippled breast—  
Boundless my thirst, life-old my quest—  
O hide no more, but satisfy,  
Though I grow drunk or mad, or die!”

## MIDSUMMER.

### A SONG.

O to lie in the ripening grass  
That gracefully bends to the winds that pass,  
And to look aloft the oak-leaves through  
Into the sky so deep, so blue !

O to feel as utterly free  
As the rice-bird singing above on the tree,  
Or the locusts piping their drowsy whirr,  
Or the down that sails from the thistle-burr !

O to float like the cloudy drifts,  
Changing hue as the sunlight shifts,  
Or hastening gaily into the West  
To follow the blushing sun to rest !

○ for the secret of Nature's power  
To drain the joy of the present hour!  
○ to work and glow in the sun!  
○ to sleep when the day is done!



## THE POWER OF IMPOTENCE.

ALL objects rare wealth's loadstone drew to her,  
Just as the golden ray-cords of the sun,  
With hidden tension, draw the bashful flowers,  
To gladden Spring, from exile underground.  
For her the deftest potter in Japan  
Painted strange shapes on fragile porcelain;  
For her the slopes of vineyard-flecked Champagne  
In grapes distilled their hoard of merriment;  
For her a thousand slaves Golconda searched,  
That diamonds might dazzle in her ears;  
For her, in lotos-languid Southern groves,  
The lazy peasant gathered fruits and flowers;  
For her, unconsciously, the artist strove  
To catch his fancy in a mesh of color;  
For her musician tuned and poet sang,  
And all that Nature, industry and art  
Conceived most fair, if she but willed, she had.

## THE NEW COLUMBUS.

As ocean clasps the land  
And ether wraps the earth,  
So Music's tuneful seas  
The spirit-world engirth.

The waves forever break  
In rythm upon the shore,  
But sweetest melodies  
Are theirs who dare explore.

The vagrant winds have learnt  
A single sad refrain;  
Each songster warbles forth  
A fragmentary strain;

Composers load their ships  
Upon this sea, and thence  
They steer their precious freight  
Into the ports of sense.

But thou, Beethoven, thou  
Columbus of Sound's sea,  
First reached the boundless main,  
Where reigneth harmony.

As those who deepest dive  
And thou who highest soar,  
Thou foundest all serene  
Where love lives evermore.

## FAME.

"BETTER than aught is fame," he said;

"'T is better than wealth or wine  
To see the populace sway its head,  
And to hear its shouts combine!

"Sweeter than kiss the bridegroom sips  
Is the honey sweet of fame,  
When the grateful nation opens its lids h/  
To utter a hero's name!"

Trampled by hoofs and heavy feet,  
With powder and blood bestained,  
His body they found, on the foe's retreat,  
Where the bullets thickest rained.

Silently through the crowded street  
The muffled coffin came:  
Not a word was said—hearts quicker beat:  
And that was the hero's fame.

## SYMPATHY.

UPON your brow my hand I'd lay  
And charm the sombre thoughts away,  
Just as the sun dispels the mists  
Which hide from him, at morning's birth,  
The beauty of his love, the Earth.

My heart upon your heart I'd press  
'Till I had learnt your dear distress;  
And as the magnet to itself  
The poison-pointed needle draws,  
So I'd entice your sorrow's cause.

And in the stead of doubts and grief  
You'd feel ineffable relief  
Your soul's recesses interfuse,  
As when the Spring's first fragrant breath  
Whispers that Nature knows not death.

**SYMPATHY.**

**101**

Thus I'd from you your anguish steal,  
And you the larger life should feel  
Of love's complete duality;  
While I the mystic bliss should know  
Of banishing my darling's woe.

## JUNE.

THE violets bud in May  
And the roses blush in June,  
To each joy there's a day,  
To every bird a tune.

What flowers should I bring  
To thee, this joyous day?  
What verses can I sing  
That will not die away?

If any beauty lie,  
Pearl-like, snugly hidden  
In these heart-thoughts, I  
Learnt it from thee, unbidden.

Thy love, a magic key,  
    Unlocked for me life's splendor;  
What can I offer thee,  
    What sweet soul-service render?

The violets fade away  
    And the birds forget their tune;  
But forever blest this day,  
    Thy natal day, in June!



## DIRGE.

NEVER again will your eyelids lift

    Their icy veil from your hazel eyes,  
Though I madly beg one glance, and swift  
    From my breaking heart the hot tears rise.

Never again, though I lay my cheek

    Close down to yours and listen, dear,  
Will your frozen lips one loved word speak  
    That 't were sweeter than angel's song to hear.

Never again, though your heart I press

    As mine you pressed in childhood's days,  
Shall I feel it beat and know you bless,  
    Though never a word your still mouth says.

## IN BEREAVEMENT.

RISING, falling, like angels calling,  
Cometh your song to me;  
Now storm-like beating, now hush'd, retreating  
Like the wave of a tideless sea.

Hope is throbbing, despair is sobbing,  
The great tears hotly well  
Faster and faster as Song their master  
Freeth them by his spell.

O magic power! O blessed dower!  
Canst thou bring no relief  
To the spirit broken with farewells spoken,  
To the heart with a deathless grief?

## THE HYMN OF FORCE.

I AM eternal!!

I throb through the ages;

I am the master

Of each of Life's stages.

I quicken the blood;

Of the mate-craving lover;

The age-frozen heart

With daisies I cover.

Down through the ether

I hurl constellations;

Up from their earth-bed;

I wake the carnations.

I laugh in the flame  
As I kindle and fan it;  
I crawl in the worm;  
I leap in the planet.

Forth from its cradle  
I pilot the river;  
In lightning and earthquake  
I flash and I quiver.

My breath is the wind;  
My bosom the ocean;  
My form 's undefined;  
My essence is motion.

The braggarts of science  
Would' weigh and divide me—  
Their wisdom evading,  
I vanish and hide me.

My glances are rays  
From stars emanating;  
My voice through the spheres  
Is sound, undulating.

I am the monarch  
Uniting all matter;  
The atoms I gather,  
The atoms I scatter.

I pulse with the tides—  
Now hither, now thither;  
I grant the tree sap;  
I bid the bud wither.

I always am present,  
Yet nothing can bind me;  
Like thought, evanescent,  
They lose me who find me.

---

## WORLD-WOE.

WESTWARD, roaming with the sun,  
Noon hath now three hours sped,  
And the shadows have begun  
(Like the first approach of dread  
That besets the joyous mind),  
Crouching tree and bush behind,  
From their hiding-nooks to run,  
Stealthy stalkers, one by one.

On the ocean's farthest rim—  
Sea or sky, which may it be?—  
Phantom-like the vessels swim—  
Are they of the sky or sea?  
Now they 're dark as they emerge  
From the vague horizon's verge;  
Now so ghostly grown and dim  
That they vanish like a dream.

Silence bindeth bird and breeze :

Motionless the glossy vine,

As if cut in marble frieze,

Stretches down each slender bine :

In the thirsty yellow grass

You might hear a fairy pass,

Or the blooming apple-trees

Whisper to the vagrant bees.

Stands the lighthouse, white and mute,

Yonder on the windless hill :

Nature's kingdom—flow'r and brute—

Seems to wonder and be still,

As the Master's voice to hear

Penetrating far and near

Through the universe, until

With his message all things thrill.

All, alas! save you and me.

What a tempest roars within!

What a different sight we see

As we look on life and sin!

In our minds a sickening doubt,

Like the shadows, lengthens out,

That our life may only be

Fate-delighting misery.

We perceive the fatal laws

Flashing, beamlike, to their goal—

Never hurry, never pause

Interrupts them as they roll:

And we watch them abjectly,

Not because we fear to die,

But despair our spirit gnaws

Thus to feel, not see the cause.



When we cannot know the rest  
Hell it is to know so much;  
We would soar beyond the West  
We must hobble on a crutch.  
Woe to mortals who are curst  
With a God-desiring thirst;  
Naught but sorrow have they pressed  
Out of Nature's shriveled breast!

Though we speak not, yet I know  
You are thinking as I think,  
That our life is wasted so  
At contentment's very brink.  
What avails it all for us  
Nature beautifieth thus,  
Decking in a matchless glow  
Sky and earth and sea below?

What avails it we are wise

In the bookishness of man?

What avails it that our eyes

Art and Nature's best may scan?

We have only seen the rind:

We have never pierced behind

Where the truth eternal lies

Lit by joy and by surprise.

What though afternoon now glide

Towards the twilight's rarer charms,

As a bridegroom draws his bride

Blushing softly to his arms:

What though westward sky and sea

Like a scarlet hope-flush be?

Doubts within us still abide—

We are still unglorified.

Now the dusk breeze brings us o'er  
From the town the whistles' shriek,  
Bidding workmen toil no more,  
Knelling Labor's weary week:  
Telling men, *You have one day*  
*For your rest, instruction, play:*  
*Praise the Lord whose blessings pour:*  
*Monday, millwards as before.*

Are ye mortals or machines  
Doomed to sweat and grovel thus?  
Yet despair (O marvel!) leans  
Less on ye, work-worn, than us.  
You accept your cloddish lot,  
Starve and die, yet murmur not!  
You from wretchedness who screens?  
Yet you ask not what life means.

If to feel joys more intense  
We must bear intenser pain,  
Suffering in a sharpen'd sense,  
Is our boasted culture gain?  
Do they not more largely thrive  
Who but glutton, drink and wive,  
In supreme indifference  
Of their fate when they go hence?

Cease to goad us, riddles vain!  
Look, the summer night is here:  
Let us rest the baffled brain;  
Let us watch the stars appear;  
As when children, let us say,  
*God sends smiles in ev'ry ray!*  
Once we heard the angels plain:  
Let us dream of Heaven again.

But, alas! we can't forget—

Cannot be what once we were—

Cannot break through Reason's net—

Cannot pluck out Doubting's spur.

If we watch the star-sown skies,

The old questions quickly rise,

And the stars enigmas set

Man hath never answered yet.

Sluggish planets, upward creep!

Vainly art thou splendid, night.

We are too soul-sick to weep

That now nothing gives delight,

That thou, Nature, hast no power

Even for a day, an hour,

Our despair from us to keep:

All we crave of thee is sleep.

\* \* \* \* \*

Spirit! summer now is past,  
And November hides July,  
Ghost-like leaves pursue the blast,  
Birds belated southward fly:  
You, alas! you too have fled—  
Like the summer you are dead:  
Clods upon your bier were cast—  
Nature brought you sleep, at last.

Spirit! though I crawl forlorn  
Underneath the winter sky,  
Though by grief's accesses torn,  
For a sign from you I cry:  
Better thus alone to crawl,  
Better thus in vain to call,  
Than to feel the sceptic scorn  
In my soul but lately borne.

Spirit! though my heart has bled  
And the anguish must remain,  
Though no love can fill your stead  
And the future offers pain—  
Still the stars seem nearer now,  
Death and life more friendly grow,  
And though Reason shakes his head,  
I believe you are not dead.

## THE REAL VICTOR.

SHOW me a wife that truly loves her lord,  
And I'll show you a cunning diplomat.  
By tender tears, by smiles, by stratagems—  
Now cold, now hot, and now indifferent—  
Defiant and submissive—coaxing, coy—  
She suits her conduct to his changeful mood,  
And is his mistress, though she seem his slave.  
Woe to the wife who thinks herself secure  
When she succeeds in capturing his heart!  
To take is easy, but to keep is hard:  
A husband's love is always to be won.



## THE FIRST STAR.

DAY dies ruddy and scarlet,  
Death and night conquer the light;  
But behold where East a scarlet  
Peeps and quivers bright!

Thee, star, cherish we grateful;  
Thou hast all thy friends outsped,  
Bringing us the message fateful—  
Light in Heaven's not dead.

TO A FRIEND GOING BEYOND  
THE SEA.

OCEAN, lift my loved one gently;  
Waves, your restless temper tame;  
Winds, I charge ye, speed before her,  
And her loveliness proclaim.

Foreign lands, bestow proud welcome,  
Give her of your sweetest, best;  
You have not a queen to rival  
This free daughter of the West.

Show to her your boasted treasures,  
Heap your marvels, Paris, Rome;  
Kings, put on your gorgeous garments  
She has kings for friends at home.

## FAILURE.

Failed! failed! O woe!  
To fail and know!  
Once more to feel the tug of Sin  
And Will's losing fight begin!

Though dearest friend is blind  
Wherein my failure lies,  
I know and fix my eyes  
Ever on myself, within—  
Fix and blush, hate, despise.

From inward search is no escape:  
Lurk not in poppy nor in grape  
Juices so exceeding deep  
They can lull Remorse to sleep.

'T is not because the Sin was sweet  
That thou it often shalt repeat.  
There is no pleasure in the cup  
To the drunkard who trembling lifts it up;  
'T is not to gratify her lust  
That the fallen wretch still breaks her trust;  
'T is the knowledge of former failure urges,  
And the dread of helplessly doing, scourges  
To sin again, to fall and fall  
'Till Will is naught, and Fate is all.

Sin whispers softly: "Thou art mine:  
What irks it now that thou repine?  
Thou hast crost the magic fatal line,  
Thou hast tasted once the forbidden vice:  
What matters it now whether twice, or thrice,  
Or a thousand times thou taste again,  
Since thou ne'er canst be what thou hast been?

"I bind thee tightly in my mesh.  
Was thy vanquisher the flesh?  
Think not from him that thou mayst flee,  
But ever shall thy fancy see  
Coaxing women beckoning thee—  
Venuses, with snow-white arms  
And luscious breasts and nectar charms,  
And legs so supple, soft and white  
That the sense bewilders at the sight;  
And if thou wouldst turn away,  
Hear the most voluptuous say  
Words so potent, firing, sweet,  
That thou canst no more retreat;  
And she gently draws thy form  
To her body, throbbing, warm,  
Which enkindles so thy lust  
Thou criest, *Though Heaven be lost, I must!*  
Then is thy strength again undone—  
And then I again have won.

"Or is thy tyrant-tempter wine,  
Thou still art destined to be mine.  
Why shouldst thou all bottles flee?  
The danger lies alone in thee.  
Though thou dwellest from men apart,  
Canst shun the comrade in thy heart?  
Canst shut thy mind upon the glass?  
Dost never see it pass, repass,  
Foaming with fruity, fragrant juice,  
Sparkling with liquid amber's hues?  
Dost never hear each drop cry, *Haste!*  
*For merriment hides in my taste!*  
*Why struggle churlishly, resist?*  
*Care was drowned in me, thou wist.*  
*Nay, spurn me not,—take but one sip,—*  
*Let me but touch your burning lip,*  
*And if I fail to bring thee mirth*  
*Spill me rudely on the earth.*

“In winter, in that goblet forms  
Draught that every fibre warms;  
In summer, on that goblet’s brink  
Swims enticing, frosty drink.  
Though thou dost resist the first,  
The other shall resolutions worst.  
Reckless, madly shalt thou seize  
And drain the potion to the lees,  
Knowing in thy heart full well  
That drags thee nearer down to hell.

“If thy gaze be forward cast,  
Is not thy future lit by thy past?  
Do not failures multiply  
Before thy horror-stricken eye—  
(As the eagle’s circles narrow  
When he swoops upon the sparrow)—  
’Till before thee only lies  
An eternity of vice?

"If this thy doom, if none can save,  
Shun not whatever thou mayst crave.  
Thy struggles at the most delay  
My victory an hour, a day.  
As well surrender first as last,  
Knowing I gripe thee ever fast.  
Bow, then, to thy predestined lot—  
(Laugh thou, or weep, it alters not)—  
Learn, then, that by decree divine,  
Mine thou art, forever mine!"

Bewildered, doubting, terrified,  
Whence came this sentence I replied?  
"Neither appetite nor lust  
Hath the right to say, *Thou must.*"



## UNWORTHINESS.

WHEN I remember what I am  
And what I know my love to be,  
I tremble lest some day she grieve  
My large unworthiness to see.

O love, if e'er this grief befall,  
I pray thee, pity and forgive:  
By thy sweet grace and purity,  
If thou still love, I'll learn to live.

## A NEW YEAR'S GREETING.

IN the dusk, before the night-fall,  
When the first stars faintly glimmer,  
And the moon grows redder, brighter  
As the western sky grows dimmer,  
Have you ever paused to listen  
To the distant chimes a-pealing,  
To the music rushing, stealing  
O'er the valley, o'er the river  
Where the earliest moonbeams quiver?

From the belfry, whence the ravens  
Forth, like startled spectres, sally,  
How the bell-sounds rise and tremble,  
Float and tremble o'er the valley:  
And the heart a wish re-echoes  
To the far-off dusky greeting—  
Now advancing, now retreating,  
Creeping, leaping, plunging, bounding  
Through the silence all-surrounding.

"May the future touch you lightly,  
Bright for you may New Years muster,  
May they bring content, and ever  
In your face may shine with lustre  
Hope and health, life's sister graces."

Hush ! the peal grows fainter, fading  
Like a vision, sense-evading ;  
But the wish grows strong and sure  
As a thing that shall endure.

## **TOSSED.**

OVER my spirit the years have sped  
Like summer gusts o'er rip'ning grain;  
Into my mind strange thoughts have cleft,  
Like the barbs of arrows dipped in pain;  
And I ask myself, with a mystic dread,  
Am I still that I of days long dead?

But I scarcely dare to number out  
The fatal changes time hath dealt,  
And I shrink from asking my spirit why  
I feel not now as once I felt;  
For if thoughts with chameleon swiftness change,  
Who can tell how far from truth they range?

Is my wish to-day or my hope to-morrow

The guide whose hand I must blindly take ?

Is the future joy or the present sorrow

Life's utmost purpose, or will there break

Through the leaden clouds of doubt and fear

A peace that will shine forever clear ?

## THE QUESTION.

NONE more blithe a year ago,  
None more life-bewitched than I;  
Hope sparkled on the sands below  
As the stream of days flowed by.

Then the earth was honey-sweet,  
There was joy in taking breath,  
Life meant pleasure, rich, complete,  
Which must be prolonged in death.

Now the earth is blind and dumb,  
And 't is woe to live or die.  
Has the universe become  
Void of pleasure—or have I?

## FROM THE DEPTHS.

Or drowsy poppies make for me a draught,  
And juice of lotus in the potion steep,  
That when my burning lips the dregs have quaffed  
My weary brain may quickly fall asleep.

Or bring a cup from still oblivion's stream,  
That I may quench despair's unceasing thirst  
I fain would rest, I do not wish to dream,  
But sleep eternal deep in death immersed.

## THE FIRST GUESS.

FOND of my ease, but fonder far of travel,  
Many the Old World haunts which I had known:  
Many my day-dreams trying to unravel  
The tangled story of some arch or stone.  
With artist's eyes I saw the gems of Florence,  
Or watched afar the shaggy Roman herds;  
Sprinkled with spray beside loud Alpine torrents,  
I felt a poet, though bereft of words.  
I stored my mind with old and modern learning,  
I sought in books to find the magic key  
To life and all its fatal secrets, yearning  
To solve the riddle why we mortals be.  
I conned philosophies and read romances;  
I asked of Science why we live and die;  
I followed poets through their airy fancies;  
I sought and ask'd, alas! without reply.



My mind grew strong, but eagle-beaked Dejection  
    Flung o'er my thoughts the shadow of his wings;  
I wished to banish sadness by reflection,  
    And wooed the calm that meditation brings.

In vain! in vain! My heart grew dull and weary;  
    Nature no longer seem'd a choir of joys;  
Books became tasks, the world a desert dreary;  
    Men seem'd a cruel demon's helpless toys.

Then, like an angel from a heaven ideal,  
    Thou didst approach me in my deep despair:  
I found in thee the answer sweet and real  
    That I in vain had hunted elsewhere.

My heart awoke from its long fitful slumber:  
    I saw through thee, as by a hallowed light,  
Life's beauties, hopes and duties without number,  
    Shining befroe me, sweet and pure and bright.

My hope awoke; thou didst to me discover

    The peace and joy that nestle in thy heart,  
The tender graces that, like spirits, hover  
    Around thy footsteps wheresoe'er thou art.

And then I guessed the secret of our being—

    Planned by a Wisdom mortal ken above,  
Under whose spell our lives are swiftly fleeing—  
    The man is dead who has not learn'd to love.

## INTO THE GLOOM.

The world-old questions, *why* and *whence* and *whither*,  
I asked myself, and chafed for a reply;  
'Neath scorching doubts I saw my best hopes wither—  
I thought life's only answer was to die.

My mind was thronged with strange, repulsive fancies;  
My doubts grew rank and cumbersome as weeds;  
I cower'd down before Despair's advances;  
I shuddered at imaginary deeds.

For rest I hunger'd, since myself I hated,  
Yet ever selfward was my mind-gaze turn'd;  
No pleasure pleas'd me—ev'ry wish was sated,  
And ashes mark'd where once Ambition burn'd.

Belief in good, in love, in truth, was shaken,  
Evil alone I could not flee nor doubt:  
"Mankind," I said, "is terribly mistaken,  
For Faith is dead and Hope is blotted out.

"I cannot live and blindly worship beauty—  
 That in itself is but an empty creed;  
 I cannot satisfy myself with duty,  
 For what that is men are not yet agreed."

But still I liv'd, each thought, each hour a burden,  
 'Till something whisper'd: "'Tis not brave to die;  
 E'en pain may bring an unexpected guerdon,  
 Great joy as well as grief may dim the eye.

"The sun still shines, though blind men cannot see it;  
 The earth still sings, though deaf men cannot hear,  
 And love still sways mankind's great heart, albeit  
 No present love thine own torn breast may cheer.

"Deem not this creed an idle fabrication:  
 Thyself must be at fault; condemn not life,  
 If with the rhythmic infinite pulsation  
 Thy little tuneless heart is now at strife.

“From gazing on the sun thy sight is blinded;  
Thou canst not fly for merely wishing wings;  
Around the life-path of the lowly-minded  
Sweet certainty with deepest wisdom springs.

“Millions ere thee have learnt this simple teaching—  
Yet each must prove that for himself 't is true;  
Like life eternal, changeless, endless-reaching,  
To ev'ry mortal it is strange and new.

“And though the noble aim, the high endeavor,  
When acted out, mayhap seem base and low,  
Though life must veil a mystery forever,  
There is enough still granted man to know.”

## HOPE.

### A SONG.

Oh, the stars still shine above us,  
Though at day we see them not,  
And by hearts that truly love us  
We are never quite forgot.

There 's a consciousness of power  
Sometimes quivers through the brain,  
And a moment's draught of pleasure  
That repay a life of pain.

There 's a white-winged hope that hovers  
O'er the darkest human lot,  
And the stars still shine above us,  
Though by day we see them not.

## THE GOD-SEEKERS.

I SAID unto myself: "These three  
Were master spirits; Life to them  
Was priceless treasure well-bestow'd.  
With reverence they raised the hem  
Of Life's cross-woven mystic veil,  
And plainly saw where our sights fail.

"Into their ken horizons swam,  
To which the vulgar eyes are blind;  
The paths they trod led up to God,  
And were with matchless glories lined.  
Beauty and Truth as one they saw—  
Two aspects of the self-same Law."

## TO CARPERS.

O STINGY world, begrudging your applause,  
What joys sublime you miss for lack of love!  
The sweetest song the poet cannot sing,  
The perfect face the painter cannot paint,  
Because the world is dumb. Encouragement,  
Not criticism, completes the artist's strength—  
Adds swiftmess to his wings, scope to his ken—  
As winds invisible urge faster home  
The ship that speeds by steam.



## THE IMP.

A LITTLE doubt quoth in my ear:  
"Thou dost not love! She is not dear!  
Many like thee have chased, before,  
A May-day fancy—nothing more."

My heart it heard that whisper, too,  
And fluttering, questioned, "Is it true?  
Hast thou with dreams thyself deceived?"  
Then beat, like lover's heart bereaved.

Soon quoth that impish doubt again:  
"Thou art a man, and men are vain;  
Thou art a youth—young blood is fire;  
How much is love, how much desire?"

With shame-dyed cheeks, then I replied:  
"My love 's untold; three years have tried  
My passion in their crucible,  
Nor dare I yet my love to tell.

"But absence passion strengtheneth,  
If it be pure, to last till death;  
And silence is a cunning test  
Of love that 's best and worthiest;

"And hope is but a meagre crust  
For him whom gnaws insatiate lust."  
I ceased, and cast my eyes about,  
But vanished had that impish doubt.

## NOT THE WORLD'S WAY.

Is the end of fighting to surrender?

Is the aim of struggling to succumb?

Is our boasted Virtue a pretender?

And can Duty's voice be stricken dumb?

Ev'rywhere I go a form pursues me,

Luring, pleading, piquing when I turn,

Whispering mad questions to confuse me,

Solaces suggesting when I burn.

"Why deny me?" pleads the voice enchanting;

"Look but on my ripeness—touch and taste;

I will soothe your vehemence and panting;

Why this idle talk of keeping chaste?

"Did not Nature light herself our passion,  
    Bidding sex to quench the flames of sex?  
Why should you condemn a world-old fashion?  
    Why let Nature's invitation vex?

"Do your fellow-mortals need persuasion?  
    No! they early seek and late they stay;  
They repent but of the missed occasion:  
    Are you built of purer flesh than they?

"What this superstitious awe of Duty?  
    Food is giv'n for hungry mouths to eat.  
Use and pleasure likewise serveth Beauty:  
    Why prefer the bitter to the sweet?

"Sinful tempting call you my caressing?  
    Nature is the sinner, then, not I.  
Only nestle closely to me, pressing  
    Warm upon my breast, your scruples fly."

"Men," I cried, "may call resistance wasted,

Jeer and mock and dub me over-prude—

Say if those are lost who sin have tasted,

Hope there 's not for all our human brood.

"But I, temptress, move not for your pleading;

Other men may hearken if they list;

I, your charms voluptuous unheeding,

Stubbornly will to the end resist."

## CONCEITS.

OH, little doth the poet know  
How many years his words may flow  
From age to age, from soul to soul,  
And gather hearers as they roll;  
Just as a tiny crystal rill,  
That trickles gurgling down a hill,  
And loit'ring zigzag through the meads,  
Doth broaden out as on it speeds,  
Until at last—a river wide—  
A thousand vessels on it ride;  
Or, like the wheat for ages hid  
Within Rameses' pyramid,  
That, sown anew in modern fields,  
A harvest rich and bounteous yields:  
So lives the poet's truest song,  
When he has been forgotten long.

## MEN OF LITTLE FAITH.

FAITHLESS men, why build ye churches,  
Monuments of pride and pain ?  
Underneath the pines and birches  
Spreads a broader, nobler fane.

But an hour one day in seven  
You devote to themes sublime.  
Think you man can worship Heaven  
Fitly thus by schedule time?

Is your spiritual emotion  
So diluted and so dim  
You can pour your soul's devotion  
In a narrow, lifeless hymn ?

Are you such poll-parrot creatures  
You unquestioning repeat  
Pray'rs and creeds of early preachers,  
Like the witches obsolete ?

Must you, too, O callous sinners—  
Shameful 't is the truth to tell—  
To your God, as to your dinners,  
Be invited by a bell ?

Why upon St. Paul and Peter  
Have you all your duties flung ?  
Your religion might be meeter  
If you trusted to your tongue.

Are you lighted by the flashes  
Of last summer's sun to-day ?  
Will you ask the past, now ashes,  
What the present ought to say ?



Hear the earth's and sky's confession,

If you are not wholly dead :

Worship true ne'er finds expression

In the prayers already said.

### EPIGRAPH.

WHAT I was, reader, here you see :

'T is what you are, or yet may be.

If my message lodge in a single heart,

'T will sprout and thrive : I 've played my part.



1  
1  
1  
1

•











**This book is under no circumstances to be  
taken from the Building**

[illegible]

Form 410

